

THE LONDON OBSERVER

MARCH 22, 1964

THE SPY MASTER

by Kenneth Younger

THE CRAFT OF INTELLIGENCE. By Allen Dulles. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 30s.)

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THE United States came late to the creation of organised intelligence services, which, in their modern form, date only from Pearl Harbour. What was then created largely followed the British model at first, but it soon greatly outgrew every service in the world except the Soviet.

The modern American service, the Central Intelligence Agency, is now described in a straightforward and, by British standards, outspoken manner by Mr Allen Dulles, chief of C.I.A. from 1953-61, an immensely experienced diplomat and intelligence officer and a more sophisticated and less fanatical character than his even

more famous brother. Mr Dulles's aim is to bring into the open the need for a secret intelligence service, to establish the legitimacy of the place which C.I.A. occupies in American government and to remove some of the darker suspicions of it by dissolving so far as maybe the mystery which surrounds it. In this he is largely successful, even if the reader rightly remains on his guard against the whitewashing of an activity about which he cannot be told the whole truth.

Mr Dulles explains more openly than any previous writer of his standing how an intelligence service is recruited, what sort of agents it employs, how it uses modern technology and how it links its secret intelligence to information obtained from open sources before passing its assessment to the makers of policy. Though he mentions many subjects, such as double agents and cipher-breaking, which were long officially taboo in Britain, he certainly gives nothing vital away, while he gives the public a general idea of intelligence work which it is good for them to have.

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TWO main points of interest to a British public emerge. Firstly, Mr Dulles insists that C.I.A. is not a private empire. It does not interfere in policy. Over the Bay of Pigs, over Vietnam, over the U.2, where it has been widely blamed, decisions were always taken by the President and his constitutional advisers after C.I.A.'s assessment had been set alongside the knowledge and views of State and Defence departments. The chief of C.I.A., who chairs the inter-departmental body where all intelligence is collated, has, of course, a position of great influence and has direct access to the President, but that is all.

Secondly, C.I.A. is established and its rights and duties laid down by law and it is accountable not only to the budgetary authorities but to various committees and sub-committees of the Senate, which are informed even of its most secret operations. It will surprise those who know how the British Parliament is kept in ignorance of such things to learn that the U.2 operation was known throughout to the relevant senatorial sub-committee and that no leakage occurred.

There is a link here with the current controversy in Britain over the possibility of the Government sharing with a parliamentary committee some of the secrets of defence and foreign policy. I would not myself think it necessary in Britain to bring the intelligence service into this directly, for I do not think that parliamentary control could be effective in this field. As Mr Dulles says "the most important safeguards (for the public interest) lie in the character and self-discipline of the leadership of the intelligence service... their integrity and their respect for the democratic processes."

These things cannot be judged by Parliament, but only by the Ministers and senior civil servants who know the men and make the appointments. All the same, it is instructive that the Americans have found it possible to bring even the most secret aspects of their defence activities into the parliamentary arena without damaging the efficiency of the service.

* Kenneth Younger, Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and a former Minister of State at the Foreign Office, was a member of the Radcliffe Committee of Inquiry into the security services in 1961.